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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Reserve

U. S. Department of Agriculture

A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

FEB 14 '79

Issue #38
June 11, 1976

UNAUTHORIZED USE OF EMERGENCY EXITS.....Employees are continuing to use designated emergency exits to leave the South and the Administration Buildings. This deliberate disregard of the published regulations compromises the goal of the security program--to protect employees and their property from those who have no legitimate business in USDA Buildings. Checks by security personnel disclosed rather widespread use of the emergency doors at Wings 1, 3, 5, and 7, on the C Street side of the South Building. Wings 2, 4, and 6, are the only doors authorized for use at the opening (7-9 a.m.) and close (4-6 p.m.) of business. Security officials will continue to monitor the emergency exits at these times. Employees misusing these doors will be apprehended and identified. Letters to their agency heads may recommend appropriate action. (Contact: Carl Tant, OI, ext. 76001.)

USDA ATTIC/BASEMENT TOUR RESULTS.....The effort that most agencies have spent in cleaning up their storage areas was evident during the Assistant Secretary's tour of the attic and basement storage areas on June 8. In the attic, row on row of empty transfer cases stand ready for disposal and thousands of files have been reviewed and disposed of or made ready for transfer to the GSA's Record Center. Although work in the attic is not complete, most agencies are to be congratulated on their efforts to date. Agencies have identified approximately 21,700 square feet of storage space for release - resulting in savings potential of about \$122,000 annually. In the sub-basement, however, the effort has really just begun. With a few notable exceptions, such as the Printing Plant paper storage area and the EMSC furniture storage area, much work is needed to bring storage areas into acceptable condition. Arrangements have been made with GSA for removal of excess transfer cases, equipment, shelving, etc. OO will be in contact with each agency shortly to discuss sharing the cost of a labor pool to move unwanted items from agency space to staging areas for pick-up by the GSA Contractor. (Contact: Al Cauley, OO, ext. 72815)

HONOR AWARDS GRANTED TO 104.....USDA was pleased to recognize the outstanding achievements of 104 individual employees and working units at the Honor Awards Ceremony on May 25. The Secretary was especially pleased to note that 74 field headquarters were represented among the award recipients. Fifteen awards went to women; five to minorities. The grade distribution of 86 awards to individuals follows: GS-14 and above, 49%; GS-9-13, 44%; GS-8 and below, 7%. Some improvement was noted in the documentation of nominations submitted this year. Agencies are urged to emphasize in the future, better write-ups reflecting accomplishment rather than job responsibility, and to nominate across the board - by grade, headquarters, women, and minorities. (Mae Paulsen, OP, ext. 75618)

LEGISLATIVE ITEMS OF INTEREST.....

- ... Food Stamp Reform. The House Agriculture Committee continued mark-up on the bill H.R. 13613. The Committee has agreed to (1) disallow the sale of hot food items in food chain stores, (2) prohibit stores purveying hunting and fishing equipment from accepting food stamps, (3) prohibit certain eligible households in Alaska from purchasing hunting and fishing equipment; and (4) not extend the program to American Samoa.
- ... Overseas Training. House has passed with amendments S. 3052, USDA dependent's overseas training. The measure now returns to the Senate.
- ... Land and Water Resources Bill. The Senate passed S. 2081 which would direct SCS to develop a National Land and Water Conservation Program. The Department opposes enactment.
- ... Young Adult Conservation Corps. This bill was passed by the House on May 25, 1976. Amendments to the bill include (1) changing the method of appropriations; (2) directing the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to include in their plans any suggestions or proposed changes that they may have regarding the allocation of funds under the state grant program; (3) eliminating the \$700 million per year authorization level over the next 4 years and instead authorizing such sums as necessary; and (4) a clarification of "preference for unemployment" language for young adults who may reside in countries which do not keep data on unemployment levels.
- ... Estate and Gift Tax Legislation. Mark-up by the House Ways and Means Committee is continuing. H.R. 13966 would include (1) a unified rate schedule, (2) increase the marital deduction in certain instances, (3) imposing a progressive tax, similar to the capital gains tax, (4) extension of the payment rule, and (5) imposing a tax on property transferred to another generation.
- ... Agriculture Appropriations for FY 1977. On June 8, a subcommittee of Senate Committee on Appropriations approved for full committee action proposed Agriculture Appropriations for FY 1977.
- ... House Committee on Appropriations reported the following bills on June 8:
 - H.R. 14231, FY 1977 Interior appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1218);
 - H.R. 14232, FY 1977 Labor and HEW appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1219);
 - H.R. 14233, FY 1977 HUD appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1220);
 - H.R. 14234, FY 1977 Transportation appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1221);
 - H.R. 14235, FY 1977 military construction appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1222);
 - H.R. 14236, FY 1977 public works appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1223);
 - H.R. 14237, FY 1977 Agriculture appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1224);
 - H.R. 14239, FY 1977 State, Justice and Commerce appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1226);
 - H.R. 14260, FY 1977 Foreign Aid appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1228);
 - H.R. 14261, FY 1977 Treasury, Postal Service and General Government appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1229);
 - H.R. 14262, FY 1977 Defense appropriations (H. Rept. 94-1231). pp. H 5453-54

(Contact: OMF's Legislative & Financial Reporting Division, ext. 74654)

CENTRAL ANSWERING SERVICE TO BE ESTABLISHED ON A 90 DAY TRIAL BASIS STARTING JUNE 14.....The centralized controlled correspondence unit will provide prompt responses to Secretarial correspondence of a recurring and non-controversial nature. Within demonstrated capability, the unit will answer immediately all mail addressed to the Secretary or to the Department which need not go to an Agency for reply. Examples of correspondence the unit will answer are (1) routine correspondence not requiring agency program knowledge, (2) agency "campaign" mail, after the campaign has been identified and a standard reply has been prepared by the agency, (3) routine recurring correspondence regarding agency programs which have or could have pre-prepared responses, and (4) additional types of correspondence to be decided upon as the unit gains proficiency. The pilot program will be staffed by six persons (unit head/writer, correspondence review officer/writer, two writers, and two automatic typewriter operators) detailed from Staff Offices and be located in Rooms 120-W, 135-W and 139-W. The proposed workflow pattern will have Secretary's Records identify and refer appropriate letters to the unit. The unit will assign the letter(s) to writer(s) or return to Secretary's Records for Agency reply. The prepared response will be reviewed, sent to the Asst. Sec. for Adm. or Programs (or Agency Administrator) for signature. File copies will be forwarded to the agency, Secretary's Records, and the unit will retain a copy. Management Council will be kept advised of developments. (Contact: Bob Sherman, OMF, ext. 76176)

CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THE FISCAL YEAR 1977 APPROPRIATIONS BILL.....The House is scheduled to take up action on our FY 1977 Appropriations bill on June 15th. The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee mark-up of our FY 1977 Appropriations Bill is scheduled for consideration by the full committee on June 18th. Based on the progress of congressional action to date, there is a strong possibility that both House and Senate action on the FY 77 Appropriations Bill will be completed prior to the summer recess of Congress. (Contact: R. Sherman, OMF, ext. 76176)

END-OF-YEAR EMPLOYMENT CEILINGS.....June 19 is the cut-off date for this fiscal year's employment ceilings. All agencies have been urged to take the necessary actions to comply with their ceilings so that the Department does not exceed its total of 80,380 "full-time" and 39,000 "all other" positions. Exceeding our totals could result in additional employment controls from OMB in the future in the way of monthly targets and reports by agency. (Contact: Bob Sherman, OMF, ext. 76176)

THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HAS REPORTED THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE 1977 BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR THE FOREST SERVICE....Major changes from the President's budget are:

- + \$3.5 million for timber sales administration.
- + \$2.0 million for rangeland management.
- \$1.4 million for forest research.
- + \$8.9 million for cooperative forest fire control.
- + \$4.9 million for construction and land acquisition.
- + \$28.0 million for Youth Conservation Corps.
- + \$60.0 million in program level for the forest roads and trails program.
- + 729 permanent employment positions to go with Committee increases.

(Contact: R. Sherman, OMF, ext. 76176)

THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RELATED AGENCIES MARKED UP THE AGRICULTURE AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL FOR FISCAL YEAR 1977.....While this was an open session, the amounts reflected in the draft bill and related report were not discussed publicly. We have been given an indication that the Senate mark-up action reflects changes from the House Bill as follows:

<u>Increases Over Amount in House Bill</u>	<u>Amount (In Millions)</u>	
Agricultural Research Service	+9.7	
Cooperative State Research Service	+5	
Extension Service	+10	(Includes \$5 million forest resources and wildlife management)
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	+11	(Includes \$6 million for meat and poultry)
Commodity Credit Corporation	+705.6	(Restored budget amount)
Rural Housing Insurance Fund - loans	+105	(1976 level)
Farm Labor Housing	+1.5	
FmHA - Salaries and Expenses	+3.5	
Great Plains	+2	
Special Milk	+11	
Foreign Agricultural Service	+1	
Child Nutrition - Program Level	+28	(Includes a decrease of \$300 million in appropriated funds and an increase of \$328 million from available Section 32 funds transferred to this program)
<u>Decreases From Amount in House Bill</u>		
Agricultural Marketing Service - payments to states	-1.6	
Water and Sewer Grants	-100	
Agricultural Conservation Program	-15	

We also anticipate report language to provide for a speed up of the program on Rural Rental Supplements and that any portion of the \$500 million guaranteed rural housing loans added by the House which is not needed for that purpose can be used for other types of loans. (Contact: R. Sherman, OMF, ext. 76176)

DID YOU KNOW THAT FCS.....

- ... determined in its annual national survey that total business volume of farmers cooperatives was \$21.7 billion. Memberships in 7,786 cooperatives stood at 6.1 million.
- ... grain task force reported to the boards of directors of the nation's largest grain cooperatives to advise them on how to increase farmers' present 7 to 8 percent share of direct exports.
- ... found that 34 fruit and vegetable cooperatives ship 4.5 billion pounds annually and that they have opportunities in joint transportation and distribution that would improve customer service, increase sales, and strengthen the market share.
- ... helped an Ohio livestock cooperative plan for the future by projecting livestock trends - a study indicating that by 1985 the State's beef herd will expand and change the State from a net importer to a net exporter of feeder cattle.
- ... showed fishermen of St. Croix, Virgin Islands, that they, like farmers, would gain economic benefits through a cooperative, a suggestion they pursued by borrowing \$259,000 to build a fishery handling facility.
- ... determined that family-size egg producers operating a cooperative decentralized egg production system would have difficulty competing -- unless they accepted lower returns -- in an industry dominated by centralized owner-integrated complexes.
- ... completed work on a 744-page book entitled "Legal Phases of Farmer Cooperatives."
- ... published a series of four publications on cooperative success stories -- Sunkist Growers, Inc.; Riceland Foods, Inc.; American Crystal Sugar Company; and Central Carolina Farmers, Inc. -- to inform the general public and the farming community of case studies of cooperative accomplishments on behalf of their members.
- ... filled 3,708 requests for 121, 253 copies of agency publications.
- ... issued monthly its current periodical, Farmer Cooperatives, to about 10,000 managers, directors, and other leaders and advisors associated with farmer cooperatives.

THE USDA EXTENSION SERVICE MET IN KANSAS CITY, MO., MAY 25-26, COMPLETING FOUR REGIONAL ES MEETINGS..... Purpose was to instruct ES Field Personnel on application of the following:

- ... New guidelines and formula for determining staff manning requirements, as pertains to minorities, in each state and county office.
- ... Establishment of personnel recruiting areas at the state and county level.
- ... Methods for increasing outreach in order to insure minority participation in hiring and program services.
- ... Program documentation which will be used to satisfy OEO/OA civil rights review requirements.
- ... Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) modification.

Implementation date for the new procedures is December 1, 1976. After 30-60 days, normal civil rights reviews will be accomplished by OEO/OA to determine compliance or efforts made to achieve compliance by the State Extension Services. (Contact: Miles W. Washington, Jr., OEO, ext. 74256)

ADP NEWS NOTES.....

- ... A-11 Spring Submission. As of June 8, 1976, RDS and SCS have not yet submitted their Spring A-11 to ADS.
- ... OMB ADP Visit. Final arrangements for OMB visit to USDA regarding A-11 will be made this week. (Contact: H. Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275)

HIGHLIGHTS OF JUNE 10 MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING.....

- ... Highlighted Senate Mark Up of FY 1977 USDA Appropriations Bill. See page 3 for details.
- ... Commented on results of USDA effort to more efficiently utilize storage space. See page 1 for details.
- ... OP briefed council about Agricultural Management Planning Seminar (AMPS) held at Harper's Ferry and recommended continuation of training program on limited basis.
- ... Discussed need to have more control over who is driving government vehicles and problems surrounding the issue.
- ... Discussed 90 day pilot central answering unit. See page 2 for details.
- ... ADS reported that OMB's ADP review team will probably visit Assistant Secretary Bolduc's office on Monday, June 14 to start agency ADP justification audits. (See May 25 Management Council Meeting Highlights, Issue number 37, for details). Agencies will be advised of agency visitation schedule when dates are known.
- ... Status of USDA's security program was updated. Unauthorized use of emergency doors and safety of pedestrians in parking courts still a major concern. See page 1 for details.
- ✓ ... DUE DATE REMINDER. Council members were reminded to send comments on EEO Committees to Office of Personnel.